The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters officially concerning the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1704 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1943 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 33, NO. 49

WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

President Roosevelt and Premier Stalin gave Prime Minister Churchill a birthday party during their talks at Teheran. The party was conducted in the Russian style, which means there were plenty of toasts. After the participants had paid each other the customary personal compliments, Stalin arose with uplifted glass and said:

"Without American machines the United Nations never could have won the war."

As the New York Times despatch commented—"He should know."

We think the American people should know, too. And we think they should know that these machines of war were made and are being made by American workers with factories of labor and machines speed.

This is being written on the second anniversary of Pearl Harbor and the occasion presents a natural opportunity to look back on the road we have traveled and judge the progress we have made in the war effort since the day when the Axis struck its first treacherous blow against America.

The Record Speaks

What do we find?

We find that the battle of production has been won.

We find that because this battle has been won America and her Allies have been able to take the offensive in the war and push back the enemy to the point where final victory is now assured to the United Nations.

Let's examine the production picture a little more closely to see why Stalin is so enthused and why we can justifiably feel proud of the record of American labor.

We are now producing fighting planes at a rate fifteen times higher than in the pre-Pearl Harbor period. That comparison is in point of numbers alone. It doesn't tell the whole story. Our pre-war planes were mostly small trainers. Today we are producing as many bombers and are producing fighter planes which dwarf the tiny craft of pre-war days. That makes our accomplishments all the more remarkable. These American planes have helped to win the battle of the air over Europe. They have smashed the Jap Navy and driven it into hiding. They will bomb the way clear for the final push against Germany and Japan which may bring about victory in 1944.

Planes without supplies are helpless. Therefore, America was forced to engage in shipbuilding on an unheard-of scale. What are the results? We are producing more ships in two days now than in a whole month before Pearl Harbor. We have exceeded the 24 million-ton quota for 1942-1943 before the time limit expired. Ships and supplies are being moved to the fighting fronts efficiently and speedily.

How about fighting ships? Secrtbary of the Navy Knox reports that the American Navy, as of Jan. 1, 1943, has been doubled in size since Pearl Harbor eleven months of this year. That spells the end of the U-boats and the Japs.

When Tanks Were A Label

What about tanks and guns and ammunition? These items have ceased to be a problem. Remember the early days of the war when our troops in maneuvers were so short of tanks that they had to use trucks labeled "Tank"? That futile, frightening condition is over. America is now producing more tanks, guns and ammunition than is needed by our own armed forces and those of the United Nations.

War construction was a tremendous problem, too, at the time of Pearl Harbor. We needed camps to train our soldiers, new airfields to train pilots, new factories to produce munitions, new shipyards to build a fleet of ships. This program presented the greatest construction job the nation ever undertook. It's practically a thing of the past now. It was completed in all essential particulars long ahead of schedule. Construction now is almost at a standstill, because there's no more to be done.

These are some of the tremendous feats of labor achieved by American workers in the short space of two years. In the alarming days after Pearl Harbor, when it looked as though we were task of conversion to war production would take eternity, scarcely anyone dared dream of victories as far so soon. People then were talking about "too little too late." You don't hear that phrase mentioned any more these days.

So Stalin's toast at the Teheran conference was no idle compliment. It was a factual recognition of a modern miracle. Granted, Stalin merely mentioned machines, without referring to their makers. We are willing to regard this as an unintentional oversight. In fact, we are going to take the liberty of amending his statement to correct the oversight and declare this truth for the benefit of the American people of today and of future generations:

"Without American machines, made by American workers, the United Nations never could have won the war."

War Production Over The Top!

Merchant Ship Tonnage Surpasses Quotas Before Deadline

Washington, D. C.—With one month still to go, American shipyard workers had surpassed the two-year quota of twenty-four million tons of merchant shipping, Vice Chairman Lewis Douglas of the U. S. Maritime Commission, revealed.

On Dec. 1, merchant ship deliveries since Jan. 1, 1942 aggregated 25,284,297 tons, Rear Admiral Vickery declared. This total included deliveries of 164 ships of 1,092,763 deadweight tons during November. That figure—for the one month—exceeds the production of merchant ships in the entire year of 1941.

This means that America has succeeded in keeping its lifeline open to the troops around the globe and to our allies. Axis efforts to break down this bridge of ships by submarine warfare have been overcome.

Meanwhile, Secretary of the Navy Knox announced that Navy Yards and shipyards in Novemplee shattered all previous records in the construction of fighting ships. Completing the best month for the Navy since Pearl Harbor, American workers turned out more than 350,000 displacement tons of naval craft of all types. Two classes of combatant ships were outstanding—aircraft carriers and destroyer escorts, the ones the Navy needs most.

Admiral Vickery said that if it had been possible to supply the shipyards with the materials and labor they have turned out an even greater tonnage. Six vessels a day could have been put on completion at our present rate of five, if other war industries hadn't had desperate need of steel too, he claimed.

The admiral declared the actual construction of the world's greatest merchant marine has been the handiwork of workers recruited from every walk of life to learn and carry out one of the most difficult tasks in history. He said the extent of their contribution would never be visible to the public by imagining the vessels they had built since Pearl Harbor steaming in a column a mile intervals, from an unbroken line extending from Maine to Scotland, or from Dutch Harbor to Tokyo.

"The importance of the part the Liberties have played in this war," Admiral Vickery said, "can hardly be overstated. It needs no hardly be overstated. It needs no emphasis to point out that the Allied successes during this past year would have been just plain impossible without the Liberty fleet. Meeting both our domestic and military requirements now, the composition of our fleet—our ships—is proving to be a well rounded and designed to meet any type of competition now conceivable."

Yes, only two years after Pearl Harbor, America has won the battle of production. The American Federation of Labor congratulates the workers of America whose hard and sustained toil has helped to win this battle which is the key to ultimate victory.

We believe such congratulations are in order from the War Department, the Navy Department, the War Production Board, the Maritime Commission and all other Government agencies concerned.

But more than these official thanks, we think recognition of the high order of service rendered by labor to the war effort is due from the press, from the radio and from the public itself.

We say this because kind words are wonderful and labor has received few kind words thus far. We urge this because times are going to get tougher.

Yes, unquestionably the going is bound to become more difficult in the months ahead. In England they are worried about "war weariness." A similar psychological state may soon develop in this country, especially when there are no new production goals to break and we enter a period of deliberately reduced production activity.

That stage already has been reached with regard to war construction. Production of armored vehicles and of ammunition also is being cut back because we can't use as much as we can produce. All this points planes and ships are the only major categories in which production has not yet reached the ultimate height.

So, to keep up spirits and morale when the work drops off, when contracts are being cancelled and when layoffs and unemployment begin, we say this is the time to let the workers of America know that we appreciate the grand job they have done and will continue to do.

Plane Output Reaches New Heights With Great November Gains

Washington, D. C.—Warplane production hit new record heights during November, WPB Chairman Donald Nelson announced.

A total of 9,000 fighting planes was produced, of which 4,700 were immediately transferred to the armed forces. The balance, awaiting delivery, will be credited to the December totals.

The average daily production of 300 fighting planes was 28% This compares with a total production of 572 planes during the entire month of July, 1940. This means that in two days of November more planes were turned out than during a whole month a few years ago.

Thus, the Government proudly proclaims the fact that airplane production is now fifteen times greater than in July, 1940.

This is the worst news Hitler has had since the destruction of German cities and military strongholds, one by one, is made certain by the overwhelming power of American bomber production, made possible by American workers.

In his official report, Mr. Nelson said:

"Although the sustained accomplishment of the aircraft industry and its workers is almost unbelievable, the record does not close on that note to tell the whole story. Nearly one-half of the airplanes produced in July 1940 were trainer types, whereas this month's output was composed in large proportion of combat types, of which over 1,000 were 4-engined bombers. The average weight of each airplane (including spare parts) produced in July 1940 was only 2,300,000 pounds; this true measure of production effort rose to 81,500,000 pounds in November 1943. This represents an increase of 254 to this 1/3 per cent. All the other measure of progress is sustained acceleration. During the expansion period, the total monthly increase in the weight of output has averaged 9.4 per cent.

"Satisfying as this record for November is," Mr. Nelson said, "emphasis must be placed on need by the Services of even greater numbers of yet larger planes, as not only Japan, but Germany as well, can attest. We must continuously add to our striking power, and push home the pelting blows now being dealt the enemy."

AFL Demands High Wage Standards And Shorter Hours In Post-War Era

Green And Meany Launch Federation's Fight In Behalf of Nation's Workers

Washington, D. C.—In two official pronouncements, the American Federation of Labor served notice to the nation that it will not stand for wage cuts when the war ends.

President William Green, appearing before the Truman Committee of the United States Senate, declared that the economic safety of America requires shortening of working hours in the post-war period without reduction of total earnings.

Secretary-Treasurer George Meany, speaking on the American Forum of the Air, warned that lowering of wages and consequent curtailment of purchasing power would bring about a post-war depression.

Thus, a new and major post-war issue was projected into the forefront of post-war discussion—an issue on which the American Federation of Labor is determined to carry on an aggressive campaign in behalf of the nation's workers.

In his testimony before the Truman Committee, Mr. Green pointed out that by voluntarily offering their no-strike pledge to the Government for the duration of the war and by according to the economic stabilization program, American workers have sacrificed opportunities for economic advancement during war-time. He added:

"Workers have relied upon working long hours to get income to meet increased living costs. While workers are denied the right to increase wage rates to accord with increased productivity and employers' capacity to pay, we shall endeavor to restore equity by insisting that peace-time hours standards shall be established without reductions in earnings.

"High wage rates do not necessarily mean high labor costs. According to the Census of Manufactures for 1939, labor cost in the various industries ranged from 5 percent to 28 per cent. The average relationship in all manufacturing was 22 per cent. Labor made up only 16 percent of the total value of the products manufactured. Had there been wage rates 25 percent, the increased value of the product would have been only eight-tenths of one per cent. A sum which in most cases would have been readily absorbed in profit margin without decrease in rate of goods, if the number of dollars going to the workers and offering a market for goods produced would have been about half a billion. Assuming adequate controls against inflation, it is the axiom that the greater the national income is, the greater the market."

Mr. Green further rejected a theory advanced by members of the Truman Committee that it would be economically advisable for labor to reduce wage rates and thereby facilitate increased production at lower costs to consumers. If industry attempts to adopt such a plan, he said, "it will be cutting off its own nose." He explained:

"In manufacturing, when the work week is reduced from 48 hours to 40 hours, and when the number of war workers is reduced by what will undoubtedly be approximately about one-third from the war peak, these factors would reduce the annual take-home pay to about one-half of the workers' income at the time of the war peak if no counter-action is taken. Thus, if the annual payroll, which is really the market for consumer goods is around $40,000,000,000 at war peak, that market would be reduced to around $20,000,000,000 per annum after the war. Would not industry prefer to have a market of $40,000,000,000 to compete for rather than one-half that size?"

Mr. Meany expressed a similar point of view when he said, in part, he said:

"After the war ends, labor wants good wages paid for the work that labor performs; and labor also wants the workers to be employed efficiently so as to give work to everyone who seeks a job. In proposing the payment of high wages by industry after the war, labor is not thinking of itself alone but of the employer and the nation as a whole. In order to keep our factories running steadily, the American people must have the purchasing power to buy the products of these factories. By this time we should all realize that low wages do not make for prosperity in America. Wages must be low during the depression and because wages were low purchasing power was low and the depression was deep and long.

"As to the second point: Labor feels that it is better to have everyone working a 35-hour or a 30-hour week when peace returns than to have some workers working long hours and millions of others not working at all. In the latter circumstances even those who are employed are apprehensive and tend to hold on to their money instead of spending it for the products that American industry wants to manufacture and sell, and which must be kept moving into the hands of the consumers if the post-war era is to be an era of prosperity."

Green Sees South "Land of Promise" For Post-War Industrial Expansion

Richmond, Va.—America looks to the South in the post-war period as the land of promise for industrial expansion, economic development and A.F.L. President Green told the Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems here.

Speaking on the second anniversary of Pearl Harbor, the Federation leader described labor's valiant efforts in behalf of the war effort and promised that the workers of America will make equally great contributions to the solution of post-war problems.

He classified the three main post-war dangers as international, ideological and economic.

Labor's greatest contribution in the international field, he said, "will be the mobilization of public support for the adoption of a peace plan which will outlaw war for all time and provide an international instrumentality" for the enforcement of lasting peace.

In the post-war psychological crisis, Mr. Green continued, labor will stand steadfast in defense of democracy and the Four Freedoms, resisting any and all efforts to impose upon America anti-democratic ideas or forms of government.

To solve post-war economic problems, Mr. Green emphasized that labor's proposal is a vast peace-time production program which will provide maximum employment.

This applies particularly to the South, he said, because most of the new industrial centers which have the best prospects of retaining and continuing their war-time growth are located in the South. He added:

"But intelligent leadership is needed to see to it that this post-war development is economically guided and directed. The South has many natural advantages—such as good climate and workability of raw materials—it abounds in natural resources. It has plenty of it—for industrial expansion. It offers a huge new home market for industrial products.

"In addition to these advantages, the South need not and must not commit the mistake of trying to establish a low-wage economy and anti-union legislation as an inducement to business. American business is now fronted. A low wages mean low efficiency. Industry has learned that profits in the future must depend on expanded production rather than reduced labor costs.

"Also, the experiences of Southern industry with union labor in the war production program have served to eliminate former fears and prejudices. Labor and industry in the South, as in all other sections of the country, have established a fine record for co-operation to win the battle of production.

"This spirit of teamwork, in my judgment, will be projected into the post-war period as the basis for the solution of our many industrial problems. That is the American way of doing things. It is the only way we can win the peace on the home front. I appeal to the employers of the South and the people of the South to join with labor in building during the post-war period a stronger and more secure America for the future."

More Bad News For Hitler And Japs— U. S. Navy Doubled In Size In 1943

Washington, D. C.—American workers have doubled the combatant fleet of the United States Navy in less than 11 months, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox has announced.

This mammoth construction performance was disclosed with the completion of more than 419th fighting ship in 1943.

The Navy had only 419 combatant vessels when the year opened and the aircraft carrier Wasp, which was completed on November 24, was the 419th ship to be completed by American workers this year. This did not take battle losses into account. Secretary Knox said that two months of construction at that rate is required to make good the 21 warships lost since January 1.

More than 40 aircraft carriers of all types, including merchant vessel conversions, have been completed this year. The Navy had placed particular emphasis on construction of aircraft carriers and destroyer escort vessels. A goal of 260 destroyer escort vessels was set for the year and over 200 had been completed on November 25. The Secretary said the goal would be surpassed before the end of the year.

On April 9, 1943, Secretary Knox predicted that the number of combatant vessels in the fleet would be more than doubled by the end of the year. Through the efforts of workers in shipyards and in plants making component parts this goal was achieved in less than 11 months.

Secretary Knox said that despite huge gains in ship production during 1943, schedules for 1944 will be even heavier and that workers will be called upon to break the impressive record they have established this year.

U. S. Labor Making Secret Weapons

Washington, D. C.—The answer to the threats of the Nazis that "secret weapons" will be used to save Fortress Europe from the Allies was revealed by Rear Admiral W. H. P. Blandy, USN, Chief of the Navy Department's Bureau of Ordnance, who said that American workers have been producing "secret weapons" of their own and that these weapons are now being used against the enemy.

Admiral Blandy said one of these amazing new secret weapons being produced by American workers is the feel torpedo, which he officially labeled it "impossible." These new weapons, he said, are "helping in a large degree to shorten this war."

These new weapons were termed "fully comparable to the German-radio controlled bomb and acoustic homing torpedo" and are unknown either to the enemy or to the Axis satellites. "Our new weapons can be and are kept secret except that the enemy receives full knowledge of their effects," Admiral Blandy said.

Credit for these labor workers for producing countless anti-aircraft weapons that have provided surface vessels with an adequate defense against attacking planes and fire control equipment that has been partly responsible for naval successes.

Watch For These Radio Features!

Washington, D. C.—Arrangements are now being made for a special Christmas labor broadcast on Sunday, Dec. 26, on the AFL "Labor For Victory" radio program, over the NBC nation-wide network. The feature of the broadcast will be a two-way trans-Atlantic talk between American workers now touring war plants in Great Britain and representatives of the AFL and CIO in the British capital.

On Dec. 12 "Labor For Victory" will present interviews with E. J. Brown, president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and Robert McChesney, president of the National Electrical Contractors Association. They will discuss the specific post-war program which has been drafted and agreed upon by labor and management in the electrical contracting industry.

UNION IRON WORKER CITED

New Haven, Conn.—Frank Thompson, marine sergeant in the aviation engineers and a member of Local No. 424, Iron Workers, has been cited for valor in the face of heavy enemy fire while supervising the construction of aviation towers and laying landing mats during the recent Italian campaign, according to word received by his father, John Thompson, a foreman in the Winchester Repeating Arms Co. plant in this city. The latter is a former business agent of the local.

AFL AFFILIATE ELECTED BY AUTO COMPANY PLANT

Washington, D. C.—The employees of the Four Wheel Drive Auto Company, Clintonville, Wis., polled up a big majority for the AFL Auto Workers Union as their bargaining representative in an election conducted by the Wisconsin State Labor Relations Board. The vote was 907 votes for the secretary of the union, informed AFL President William Green. The AFL union received 807 votes, the Independent unit 438, and the CIO 41.

LIBERTY SHIP IS NAMED AFTER AFL UNION LEADER

Jacksonville, Fla.—The Liberty Ship "Arthur M. Huddell" was launched at the St. Johns River Shipyard here. The ship was named in honor of the late president of the AFL International Union of Operating Engineers. President Wm. Malone and Secretary-Treasurer F. A. Fitzgerald of the international union attended the launching ceremony. The AFL was represented by George L. Googe, Jacksonville representative.

MANPOWER PROBLEMS NEARING SOLUTION

Washington, D. C.—The nation's manpower problems are being rapidly solved by labor-management cooperation and by retrenchment of production schedules.

The War Manpower Commission announced that the number of labor shortage areas in the nation has been reduced from 77 to 69. Even in the districts still classified as shortage areas, the extent of manpower needs is being eased.

Meanwhile, the War Department announced that almost 8 billion dollars worth of war contracts alone were cancelled by Nov. 1. While such cutbacks and shutdowns of factory facilities are taking places, Government agencies are taking pains to facilitate re-employment of displaced workers in other war jobs.

W. W. BRITTON IS DEAD; METAL POLISHERS OFFICER

Chicago, Ill.—William Walter Britton, past international president of the Metal Polishers, Buffers, Platers and Helpers International Union, AFL, died here Nov. 28. He had for many years he had been active in the union affairs of his industry. He was delighted by the recent merger of his international union and Local No. 6, of which he was a member.

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF HAILS AFL SUPPORT

New York City.—As the 1943 nationwide campaign of the Labor Committee for Human Rights on behalf of the National War Fund nears its close, enthusiastic and grateful acknowledgments of the AFL's role in the $125,000,000 drive are reaching Matthew Woll, president of the League.

Outstanding among the letters addressed to Mr. Woll are appreciative messages from the Greek, the Yugoslav, the Chinese and the Russian relief societies, and from War Prisoners Aid, the special division set up by the YMCA to carry on relief work for prisoners now held by the enemy in prison camps.

PUERTO RICAN CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF EDUCATION

Chicago.—About 40% of Puerto Rico's 800,000 children of school age are not getting an education because the United States is not providing schools for them, Secretary-Treasurer Irvin R. Kuenzli of the American Federation of Teachers, charged.

"Thousands of Puerto Rican men of military age were rejected for service because of illiteracy, he said. Over 40% of the population cannot read or write.

Free Labor or Slave Labor?

Washington, D. C.—Nation-wide discussion was provoked by AFL President William Green's public warning against the use of forced German labor for the rebuilding of Soviet Russia after the war.

Many responses to the statement were received from all parts of the country, testifying to the majority feeling with the AFL that we are fighting this war to free workers, not to enslave them. Some of the letters pointed out that Russia is not the only country which has suffered destruction in this war. If the Soviet Union and other nations were to insist on "human reparations," Germany would be completely de-populated. Such vengeful peace terms would only provoke future wars, it was argued.

President Green's statement, which occasioned widespread comment in the press and radio as well, follows:

"Disturbing rumors in the press and over the radio attribute to Soviet Russia a plan to enslave a million German workers for forced labor in Russia when the Nazis are crushed.

"I cannot believe that there is a word of truth in these reports. They bear all the earmarks of Axis propaganda. It seems inconceivable to me that Russia could propose, or that the United Nations could support, a plan which by its very nature is completely inconsistent with the war objectives of the freedom-loving nations of the world.

"The American Federation of Labor serves notice here and now that it will oppose with all its power any attempt to enslave the workers of Germany or any other country when victory is won.

"Today and tomorrow, our message to the workers of Germany is a message of hope. We are determined that the forces of Nazi oppression and to give them every opportunity to work out democratic solutions of their problems in the post-war period.

"We call upon President Roosevelt, in his conferences with the representatives of the allied nations, to see to it that this basic principle is understood and agreed to by all."

Released Servicemen Taking Jobs In Many War Industries, OWI Finds

Washington, D. C.—The OWI reports that a majority of servicemen being discharged from the armed forces are accepting employment in war jobs where, despite their disabilities, they are doing a good job and are becoming a real factor in relieving manpower shortages.

Relatively few are taking advantage of the opportunity to obtain vocational education at the cost of the Government, but the Veterans Administration expresses the belief that many of those who are now accepting employment in industry will request vocational training after the war is over and employment ends.

To date at least 800,000 veterans of the war have been given discharges from the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. The number released from the Army from Pearl Harbor through September 30, 1943. The Navy discharged 104,152, the Coast Guard through October 31, 1943, and the Marine Corps discharged 34,000 during the same period. Of these discharged, 370,000 were released from the Army for medical reasons and 40,041 from the Navy and Marines for medical reasons. The remainder have been discharged for a number of reasons, the most important of which is overage.

Of the total number discharged, 50,000 have applied to the Veterans Administration for continued hospitalization and 2,300 have applied to the same agency for vocational rehabilitation. The bulk of the remainder have either returned to their old jobs or have taken new jobs.

A discharged veteran is entitled to the following: 1. His old job if he wants it (under certain conditions); 2. Unemployment compensation if he wish to work for the Federal Government; 3. Assistance in obtaining a job through Vocational rehabilitation or training; 4. Free hospitalization and medical treatment in a Veterans Administration hospital as long and as often as he needs it for service-connected disabilities, and for non-service disabilities if facilities are available; 5. A pension for life or as long as the disability continues for a service-connected disability if the disability is rated at 10 per cent or more.